

INTERVIEW  
WITH  
“JAN HAMMER”  
KEYBOARDS

BY  
MICHAEL DRAKE

# Reports from SUMMERFEST

## JAN HAMMER "I'm an O.K. guy"

by Michael Drake

Michelle: Do you consider yourself easy to work with?

Jan: EXTREMELY!!! To that Tony immediately cleared his voice, and we all had a good laugh.

M: What highlights in you, life?

J: Without question being present at the birth of both of my children. PSYCHEDELIC!!!

M: What was your first gig?

J: I wasn't really paid but I was 12 or 13 years old and I accompanied my mother who was a jazz singer. We played "The man I Love" and jazz standards.

M: How did this gig come about for you?

J: Well I hadn't played live for six years and Tony kept on me to do this gig. Actually I was really looking forward to doing it.

M: What about recording?

J: This gig is just to see how it feels. It would have to be more of a band thing. I have been so lucky! I have been able to do just about everything that I could imagine.

M: Do you follow your heart or try to catch up?

J: I try to catch up.

M: How do you like the traveling?

J: I have never enjoyed the traveling or the 22 hours between concerts. I am tolerant of the pitfalls because I want to perform.

M: Are you a humble person?

J: I consider humility an important ingredient in my life. In music it is very important to learn how to listen while you play. You must be constantly aware of what is going on around you. You can't just get caught up in what you are playing and pursue that. You have to realize that you are part of the larger picture.

M: How do you cue out of your solos?

J: I use visual combined with musical cues to signal end of solo.

M: How do you deal with dynamics with the larger rowdy type of crowd?

J: I've been into rock for a very long time so I like playing high energy. Tony is a very explosive player and has incredible dynamics in his playing. In concert settings you can stretch the dynamics.

JAN has several projects in the pipe-line. Mostly music for films. He is presently writing a score for an "interactive" video game. "Police Quest". The music will respond to what the player does.

## TONY WILLIAMS

by Michael Drake

Tony Williams unpredictable and explosive 4th. of July drumming style was perfect for the evening.

Jan Hammers song and solo style was interrupted by occasional flurries of fireworks of his own.

Jordan Rudes, "the keyboard wizard", was just that but I wanted more.

Fernando Saunders was mister steady Freddy. He was the glue.

It was a fun band. After spending part of the day with Tony and Jan I wish I could have done the same with Jordon and Fernando.

Between the occasional ragged edges, amps burning up on stage, the sound man not putting Jordon's keyboards on both sides of the mix until I brought it to his attention, the typical monitor adjustments and a missed cue here and there seemed to give the band a feeling of "it's time to jam".

Now don't get me wrong, but I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of these things, not just to show you my powers of observation but in part for the educational process of all those involved. I truly enjoyed the band and what they were trying to do. Have fun.

It wasn't the over slick production of a "Tower of Power", or a Chick Corea, even though some of those ingredients were there, but I felt it was the casual carefree attitude of the players that gave me a feeling of earthiness.

The programmed keyboard parts worked and were effective but I would have like to have seen and heard Jan and Jordon play along with it to augment the harmonic as well as the visual interests.

Jan had a nice variety of settings from acoustic piano to horn comps to plenty of lead sounds.

I'd love to see them at least two nights in a row. My compliments to the "Chefs".